

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-16 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 8-9 are amended to more clearly define the invention. Claims 1 and 4-8 are independent.

Applicant appreciates the courtesies extended to the Applicant's representative during the personal interview on February 1, 2005. During the personal interview, Applicant's representative explained that the Iwasaki et al. reference does not teach or suggest the features of the present invention including: 1) an elastic member that has a first elastic modulus which corresponds to a torsion angle between the first and second members that is less than a predetermined angle, and a second elastic modulus which corresponds to a torsion angle that is not less than the predetermined angle, and wherein the first elastic modulus is smaller than the second elastic modulus. (claims 1, and 4-8); and 2) an elastic member that has a two-stage torsional elastic modulus (claim 8).

These amendments are made only to more particularly point out the invention for the Examiner and not for narrowing the scope of the claims or for any reason related to a statutory requirement for patentability.

In particular, the above amendments to claims 8 and 9 were suggested by Examiner Lum during the February 1, 2005, personal interview to further expedite prosecution of the present application toward allowance.

Applicant also notes that, notwithstanding any claim amendments herein or later during prosecution, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, and the discussion at the personal interview, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-16, all the claims presently pending in the Application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for

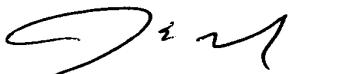
allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the Application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: 2/9/05

  
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